# XV. Neighborhoods, Housing and Urban Conservation

# **SIDEBAR**: Guiding Principles

A smart and connected community matters. Smart land use and design based on cohesive communities are respectful of our environment and create efficiencies that benefit community health, social interaction, commerce, and infrastructure.

**Prosperity matters.** Capitalizing on the innovative spirit that exists in the community will support the human, financial, and capital infrastructure needed for a sustainable and diverse economy.

*Place matters.* Regional growth should occur in harmony with the community's historical character, unique cultural resources, and natural environment.

**People matter.** All residents should be assured equal opportunities for a range of choices in housing, employment, education, health, safety, and devotion.

Healthy neighborhoods and safe and efficient housing is paramount to the vitality of our community. They contribute to safety, academic attainment, social equity and opportunity for all citizens. [End sidebar]

# **Supporting Our Unique Neighborhoods**

Neighborhoods are the backbone of every community. These are the places where people live, play, go to school, work, and interact. Flagstaff neighborhoods are unique with eclectic styles, personalities, cultural heritage, and social needs. Central to Flagstaff's urban neighborhoods is a pedestrian experience interconnecting businesses, homes, schools, places of worship, transit, and parks in a compact, walkable land use pattern. The city and county suburban neighborhoods encompass typical residential development with larger homes and yards primarily accessed by the automobile. The county's rural neighborhoods are more typically low-density "ranchettes" with barns, animals, and open space. This variety of neighborhood types is important to the region's character, vitality, quality of life, and affordability.

Each neighborhood is unique, sharing a desire to preserve its individuality, while contributing to the character of the region as a whole. A healthy neighborhood works to maintain and enhance safety and community pride with well-maintained homes and businesses, active neighbors, and healthy residents.

#### Sidebar: What Do You Think?

Results of the 2010 *Flagstaff Regional Plan* Community Values Survey identified some of the community's favorite urban neighborhoods to emulate in future development and redevelopment. Included were the historic Townsite, Downtown, Southside, North End and Coconino Estates. These neighborhoods exhibit timeless qualities of mature street trees, front porches and active neighbors. [End Sidebar]

Although "enhancing neighborhoods" appears as a good overall objective and fosters pride of place, it also raises concerns of gentrification and affordability. One example of this balancing act will be the Southside neighborhood after the Rio de Flag flood control project is complete. With the threat of potential flooding eliminated, the neighborhood will be ripe for redevelopment and infill development

that could push out its long-time residents and businesses. In an effort to manage potential transformation and preservation, the neighborhood created "The Southside 2005 Plan" to guide its future.

Neighborhood plans and county area plans address a defined neighborhood or area of the city or county. These are developed with the involvement of residents and serve as an amendment to the city or county general comprehensive plan, identifying challenges, opportunities, and the vision for that particular neighborhood. Adopted City of Flagstaff neighborhood plans include the *Southside 2005 Plan* and *La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood Plan*. Adopted area plans for communities within the Coconino County region include <sup>1</sup> Kachina Village, Fort Valley, Bellemont, Doney Park, Timberline-Fernwood, and Mountainaire.

# **Serving Our Community's Housing Needs**

As a community priority, creating more housing and neighborhood diversity for a wide range of households is paramount to a resilient Flagstaff. The *Flagstaff Regional Plan* identifies existing and potential "activity centers" through which to cultivate walkable neighborhoods, efficient transit connections, and economic opportunities. These are considered appropriate locations for sensitively designed, higher-density residential and mixed-use development, either as infill or as redevelopment.

The City of Flagstaff housing program functions under a five-year consolidated plan and an annual update with investment strategies specific to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds. The FY 2011-2015 HUD Consolidated Plan contains a description of community needs, goals, and priorities in the areas of affordable housing, human services, public facilities, and other programs designed to improve the quality of life for low- and moderate-income residents of the community. This chapter of the Flagstaff Regional Plan is intended to provide long-term guidance for meeting the region's housing needs for all economic sectors, and works in concert with Flagstaff's consolidated plan.

Several elements of the housing market impact supply and demand, including variety (the types of housing that are available), quality (most often defined by age, unit value and whether the unit has complete plumbing or kitchen facilities); affordability (defined by the percentage of household income that must be spent for housing costs); and other factors including population growth, income, and household size and makeup.

Everyone should have a chance to go home after a day at school or work, so housing, as an element of community infrastructure, needs to be available to all segments of our population. A complete range of choices is necessary within a community, from homeless housing to rental units to home ownership. The housing choices should be tailored to meet the demographic needs of our particular community. For example, if our population is 25 to 30 percent students, our housing market should be similarly structured to meet that demand.

The housing policies presented in this chapter focus on providing safe, decent housing for the well-being of individuals, households, and the community as a whole.

# **Conserving Our Urban Character**

Urban Conservation is the revitalization, remodeling and fixing-up of homes, streets, blocks or neighborhoods. Urban conservation is a way to add new vigor to an under-served neighborhood with investment, jobs, and opportunities for residents. Urban conservation is accomplished by rehabilitation of buildings, streets, and public spaces; redevelopment of underutilized and dilapidated sites; as well as infill

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://www.coconino.az.gov/comdev.aspx?id=21698 to access all Coconino County Area Plans

on vacant lots with sensitive buildings. Design solutions that are context-sensitive restore a sense of walkability using human-scale buildings, roads and signage, and respect the culture of the neighborhood in which conservation efforts are made.

#### Sidebar: Useful Terms

"Revitalization" is to repair what is already in place, adding new vigor by remodeling and preserving.

"Redevelopment" is when new development replaces outdated and underutilized development.

"Infill" occurs when new buildings are built on vacant parcels within city service boundaries and surrounded by existing development.

"Preservation" is an endeavor that seeks to preserve, conserve, and protect buildings, objects, landscapes, or other artifacts of historical significance.

"Adaptive Re-use" is fixing up and remodeling a building or space, adapting the building or space to fit a new use.

## [End sidebar]

# How Do We Manage Our Community's Needs?

Flagstaff's growing population will require an increased emphasis on housing choices in the future. The region's housing framework can be defined by:

- A limited supply of land for development
- Approximately 40 percent of Flagstaff's households are by definition low- to moderate-income (*City of Flagstaff FY 2011-2015 HUD Consolidated Plan*)
- Flagstaff is experiencing a consistent but modest rate of population growth
- Student populations at Northern Arizona University will continue to grow
- Housing needs for the elderly will increase over the next several decades as the Baby Boom generation moves into the retirement years.

Illustration:
% of single-family vs. % multi-family
Compare to existing demographics

As a tourist-driven university mountain town with seasonal weather, housing in the Flagstaff region has a higher cost and value than comparable housing in other Arizona communities. According to the Flagsataff Chamber of Commerce, the local housing cost is 37.4 percent higher than the national average. Land identified for residential development is both privately and publicly held (i.e., State Trust lands). Future housing needs will focus on revitalization, infill, and preservation opportunities, yet new neighborhood development is possible.

# **Population Growth**

Population trends are important indicators of future housing needs. Local growing population sectors include the elderly, students, single-parent households, and nonfamily households. These community members need a variety of housing options within close proximity of jobs, schools and play.

Northern Arizona University students currently make up approximately 25 percent of our population, and their continued demand for student housing may impact cost and availability of housing in the region, resulting in a higher demand for multi-family housing, or housing affordable for single-incomes or multiple low incomes (students).

# **Affordability**

Government programs define "cost burden" as paying more than 30 percent of gross household income for total housing cost (in rent or mortgage and utilities). People paying more than that have little remaining to pay for the essentials – clothing, food, transportation, and child care. Higher income households may choose to pay more for housing. As an economic development factor, housing plays an important part in major employer and workforce location decisions. Flagstaff renters versus homeowners are about 50/50, which is typical of a university mountain town. It has been estimated that second homes make up approximately 20 percent of the total housing stock in Flagstaff, which also impacts the local housing market.

Cost of housing table here Housing / Job nexus table here Second home owners table here

# **Neighborhood Conservation Efforts**

Community conservation, rehabilitation, redevelopment, and preservation efforts all support the goal of preserving our sense of place. Most people cherish certain things about their neighborhood, but everyone has issues they would like to change to make their home, neighborhood, and local community more appealing, feel safer, and in cases of commercial areas, attract more businesses and allow local businesses to thrive. These goals take effort and investment, and do not just "happen."

Current efforts in neighborhood conservation and rehabilitation have focused on commercial areas where business opportunities are prime, such as along Milton Road and Butler Avenue. Fourth Street has seen planning for corridor improvements, and Community Development Block Grant funds for housing repair and affordability are primarily spent in the historic neighborhoods of Sunnyside, Southside, and La Plaza Vieja. Rehabilitation efforts focusing on residential energy efficiency prove worthwhile in this climate, and have been significant investment in the past five years.

The policies presented in this chapter support addressing the following key challenges and opportunities for the future:

#### Need for diversity

- o Fostering mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods with a range of housing and transportation choices, in which our diverse population can afford to live.
- Recognizing multi-generational housing as a growing sector, fulfilling the needs of both the younger and older generations.

# • Community expectations

- o Balancing new development and redevelopment in lower-income and historic neighborhoods, while maintaining the essential character of those neighborhoods.
- Creating community buy-in for higher density housing development and redevelopment within the city to provide more affordable housing choices.

- Addressing the region's need for affordable housing to make community sustainability and economic development work.
- o Ensuring that rentals do not suffer from under-maintenance.

## County's role in housing

 Addressing housing growth at the periphery and outside city limits; responding by planning for how people get to work and school from these residential neighborhoods, as well as affordable housing and maintained rental concerns.

# • Who provides housing

o Ensuring that the community provides affordable housing as a comprehensive solution.

#### • Housing for non-market residents

- o Providing affordable housing options to special needs populations.
- o Addressing the needs for the homeless and those who are at risk of becoming homeless.
- o Providing housing to individuals who have been incarcerated.
- o Addressing the housing needs of students in our community.
- o Addressing the external market demand for housing in our community, which drives prices higher than our local wages can support.

# Sidebar (or possibly full page, double column, smaller text, etc.)

#### **Existing Programs**

Several neighborhood safety and social programs are in place to promote home ownership, provide assistance for improving the appearance of neighborhoods, promote maintenance of both commercial and residential buildings in neighborhoods, and provide the safety and security of neighborhoods. These programs are operated by Coconino County Health Services, Flagstaff United School District, the Police Block Watch Program, the City's Sustainability Program's community gardens, and Community Design's beautification community grants, all of which are means to successful neighborhood preservation and revitalization efforts. Examples include:

#### Elimination of sub-standard dwelling units

- City of Flagstaff Housing Rehabilitation Program
- Coconino County Housing Rehabilitation Services and CREC
- Rebuilding Together
- BOTHANDS Acquisition-Rehabilitation Program
- NACOG Housing Rehabilitation Program
- Churches
- Code Enforcement [Zoning, Building, Fire, Environmental, Stormwater]

# Improvement to housing quality, variety and affordability

# Quality:

- Programs above (for elimination of sub-standard dwelling units)
- Design guidelines
- Market demands

#### Variety:

Market demand

• Zoning which allows for and encourages mixed-income housing and mixed-use buildings

## Affordability:

## Homeless

- Flagstaff Shelter Services
- Sunshine Rescue Mission
- Hope Cottage
- Open Inn
- Alternative Center
- Northland Family Help Center and HALO House
- Sharon Manor
- Catholic Charities Family Shelter
- Catholic Charities
- The Guidance Center
- PATH Day Program and Outreach
- Coconino County Community Services
- Faith-based

#### Transitional

- Catholic Charities Cedar Rose
- Sharon Manor
- Sunshine Rescue Mission
- The Guidance Center Intake Triage Unit

#### Rental

- Market Rate
- City of Flagstaff Housing Authority
  - o Section 8 Vouchers
  - o Public Housing
- Flagstaff Housing Corporation
- Low Income Housing Tax Credit Projects (Timber Trails, Pinehurst, Mountain Side Village)
- The Ridge at Clear Creek
- NAU
- Private Developers
- Hozhoni and other Group Home providers
- Eviction Prevention
  - o Coconino County Community Services
  - o St. Vincent De Paul
  - o Catholic Charities

## Homebuyer

- Market Rate
- Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance
  - o BOTHANDS
  - o NACOG
  - o Individual Development Accounts
- BOTHANDS Inc.
- Habitat for Humanity of Northern Arizona

- Youth Build
- City of Flagstaff Ownership Programs
- Private Developers
- Foreclosure Assistance
  - o BOTHANDS Counseling
  - o Coconino County Community Services Prevention

## Provision of adequate sites for housing

- Designated Regional Plan Land Use categories for residential, density and intensity
- Appropriate and adequate zoning for residential and mixed-use
- Function of market

### Improve appearance of buildings

- Historic Preservation guidelines and incentives
- City of Flagstaff Façade Improvement Program (historic commercial buildings)
- HOA's
- Market demands and neighborhood pressure
- Code enforcement

# **Promote maintenance of buildings**

- HOA's
- Code enforcement

## **Goals and Policies**

**Goal NH.1.** Foster and maintain healthy and diverse urban, suburban, and rural neighborhoods in the Flagstaff region.

*Policy NH.1.1.* Preserve and enhance existing neighborhoods.

**Policy NH 1.2.** Respect traditions, identifiable styles, proportions, streetscapes, relationships between buildings, yards and roadways; and use historically appropriate and compatible building and structural materials when making changes to existing neighborhoods.

**Policy NH 1.3.** Interconnect existing and new neighborhoods through patterns of development, with complete streets, sidewalks, and trails.

**Policy NH 1.4.** Foster central points of activities, services, increased densities, and transit connections in urban and suburban neighborhoods.

**Policy NH 1.5.** Use traditional neighborhood design (TND) standards for new and revitalized urban neighborhoods, implementing the Smart Code in conjunction with neighborhood plans, specific plans or master plans.

**Policy NH.1.6.** New development, especially on the periphery, will contribute to completing neighborhoods, including interconnecting with other neighborhoods; providing parks, civic spaces, and a variety of housing types; and protecting sensitive natural and cultural features.

Goal NH.2. Look to downtown Flagstaff as the primary focal point of the community character.

**Policy NH.2.1.** Encourage the rehabilitation of historic downtown structures and contextual new structures as office, retail, entertainment and residential space to reinvigorate the area as a destination of culture, shopping, government, and the arts.

**Policy NH.2.2.** Plan for future downtown development and contiguous development that respects the established historic core, historical architecture, and urban design.

**Policy NH.2.3.** Continue the tradition of multi-story, multi-use buildings with the reintroduction of a stable, mixed-income residential population when planning new structures in the downtown and Southside neighborhoods.

**Goal NH.3.** Ensure that a variety of housing types at different price points is available, to provide housing opportunity for all economic sectors.

**Policy NH.3.1.** Provide a variety of housing types throughout the city and region, including purchase and rental options, to expand the choices available to meet the financial and lifestyle needs of our diverse population.

**Policy NH.3.2.** Promote accessory dwelling units, where appropriate.

*Policy NH.3.3.* Increase the availability of affordable housing for very low-income persons, through innovative and effective funding mechanisms.

**Policy NH.3.4.** Reuse former brownfields, vacant buildings, and commercial buildings to provide new mixed-use and/or housing options.

*Policy NH.3.5.* Encourage and incentivize affordable housing.

**Goal NH.4.** Ensure housing is decent, safe, and sanitary.

**Policy NH.4.1.** Expand the availability of affordable housing throughout the region by preserving existing housing, including housing for very low-income persons.

*Policy NH.4.2.* Eliminate substandard housing units by conserving and rehabilitating existing housing stock.

**Policy NH.4.3.** Address accessibility issues and other housing barriers to persons with disabilities or special needs.

**Policy NH.4.4.** Encourage green practices in housing construction and rehabilitation that support durable, healthy, and energy-efficient homes.

**Policy NH.4.5.** Renovate the existing housing stock to conserve energy and reduce utility and maintenance costs for owners and occupants.

**Policy NH.4.6.** Consider and integrate public transportation when possible in planning housing developments, to help reduce a household's transportation costs and minimize impact on the community's roads and transportation system.

Policy NH.4.7. Enforce compliance with fair housing laws.

## Goal NH.5. Eliminate homelessness.

- **Policy NH.5.1.** Provide adequate resources for families with children experiencing homelessness.
- *Policy NH.5.2.* Provide adequate resources for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- *Policy NH.5.3.* Support and expand programs that prevent homelessness.
- **Policy NH.5.4.** Ensure transitional housing resources are available to populations experiencing homelessness.

**Goal NH.6.** Ensure that neighborhood conservation efforts of revitalization, redevelopment, and infill are compatible with and enhance the overall community character.

**Policy NH.6.1.** Promote quality redevelopment and infill development that is contextual with surrounding development and neighborhoods.

**Policy NH 6.2.** Use urban conservation tools (see the Revitalization Toolbox in the Economic Development chapter on page X) to revitalize existing underutilized activity centers to their potential.